

# Kiwai language

**Kiwai** is a Papuan language, or languages, of southern Papua New Guinea. Dialects number 1,300 Kope, 700 Gibaio, 1,700 Urama, 700 Arigibi (together "Northeast Kiwai"), 3,800 Coast, 1,000 Daru, 4,500 Island, 400 Doumori (together "Southern Kiwai"). Wurm and Hattori (1981) classify Arigibi as a separate language.

Contents

Introduction

Gender

Alphabet

Parts of speech

Nouns

Adjectives

Pronouns

Verbs

Syntax

Numbers

Dialects

Vocabulary – Kiwai And English

Evolution

Videos

Further reading

Urama

La Trobe University

External links

References

Kiwai	
<b>Native to</b>	Papua New Guinea
<b>Region</b>	Western Province, Fly River delta
<b>Native speakers</b>	ca. 30,000 (2011) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Language family</b>	Kiwaian <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Kiwai</b></li></ul></div>
<b>Dialects</b>	Doumori <div>Coast Kiwai</div> <div>Southern Coast Kiwai</div> <div>Daru Kiwai</div> <div>Eastern Kiwai</div> <div>Island Kiwai</div> <div>Gibaio</div> <div>Kope (Gope, Era River)</div> <div>Urama</div> <div>Arigibi (Anigibi)</div>
Language codes	
<b>ISO 639-3</b>	Either: <div>kiw – Northeast Kiwai</div> <div>kjd – Southern Kiwai</div>
<b>Glottolog</b>	nort2930 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/nort2930">http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/nort2930</a> ) Northeast <sup>[2]</sup> <div>sout2949 (<a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/sout2949">http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/sout2949</a>) Southern<sup>[3]</sup></div>

## Introduction

Kiwai is a long/low island located on the Eastern side of the Southern entrance to the delta of the Fly River (Papua). The origin for the name Kiwai, is uncertain. The first occurrence of it, was in place names in "Dowdee" (Daudai).

Daudai was the chosen name that islanders of New Guinea, had given.

## Gender

Male and Female have specific words that are indicated to them. An interesting thing, is that there are some words that indicate the gender. East Asian languages also has a gender system within their vocabulary too.

## Alphabet

---

- 17 Letters
  - Represent sounds
  - The vowels are a, e, i, o, u
  - Diphthongs: ai, au
  - Consonants are k, g, t, d, n, p, b, m, s, v, r
  - Semivowel: w

## Parts of speech

---

1. Nouns
2. Adjectives
3. Pronouns
  1. Personal
  2. Relative
4. Interrogative words and particles
5. Verbs
6. Adverbs
7. Postpositions
8. Conjunctions
9. Interjections
10. Numerals
11. Syntax
12. Colloquial Phrases

## Nouns

---

There are a variety of different ways that nouns are used in the Kiwai language. Some of the derivations of nouns are primitive. Meaning, the words are not derived from anything previous. For example, just like in English, nouns and verbs can be related. The process of reduplication, within noun or verb, is also existent. Some nouns can be combined with two other nouns.

An important word in relation to nouns, is a gerund. A **gerund** is created from a verbal word-base by prefixing k-.

## Adjectives

---

Adjectives will always precede a noun.

- Verbal Adjectives
- Negative Adjectives
- Interrogative Adjective

- Assertive Adjective
- Demonstrative Adjective
- Comparison of Adjectives

## Pronouns

---

Personal pronouns indicate person and number

- Gender is not indicated
- Inclusive Person
- Exclusive Person
- Possession
- Relative Pronouns

## Verbs

---

Verbs are consisted of a "verbal word-base" in the Kiwai language. It is extended by suffixes and prefixes.

**Verbal Word-Base:** Verbal Word-Bases always begin and end with either a vowel, or a diphthong. It is the simplest form of a verb that is used in speech forms.

## Syntax

---

**Syntax** is the arrangement of words in order to create a well-structured sentence. For the Kiwai language, there are principal rules for the positioning of words.

1. The subject precedes verb/predicate
2. The D.O (direct object) precedes the verb, which then follows the subject
3. The word that modifies the subject/object precedes
4. Numerals precede nouns
5. Sometimes the extensions of the predicate precede the verb
6. If time is involved, the indications of time will normally appear at the beginning of a sentence
7. Infinitive phrases will appear at the end of sentences
8. Particles will precede the verb

## Numbers

---

- Numbers can be indicated by suffixes
  - Possible usage with/without the numerals
- Simple nouns have no numbers
- Few nouns have a separate plural form

## Dialects

---

There are six main dialects of this language.

1. Tureture
  1. By the mouth of the Binature River
2. Kiwai
  1. In the villages of Kiwai Island
  2. Has been adopted as the standard language for mission purposes in the Delta (By London Missionary Society)
3. Domori
  1. Island in the Fly Delta northwest of Kiwai
4. Wabuda
  1. Island between the Eastern mouth of the Fly and Bamu Delta
5. Sisiامي
  1. Village on the Dibiri branch of the Bamu Delta
6. Goaribari
  1. Mouth of the Bamu Delta

Kiwai Dialects are different in terms of vocabulary. Grammar is also different, but not too much. However, it is still of the same linguistic group.

## Vocabulary – Kiwai And English

---

E. Baxter Riley, had collected words to be added in the Kiwai-English vocabulary. A lot of the texts and translations have been modified and added by S.H.R.

**Verbal Forms:** Verbs will be placed under the simple form of the word-base, under the five vowels (a,e,i,o,u). **Compounds** are followed immediately after. However some of the compounds will be located only under some prefixes. These prefixes being: ar, em, emar, emow, er, erem, im, imar, imow, ir, irim, iriw, irow, iw, iwar, or, oror, ow, owar, and owor. The word-base, will then be located by ignoring the following initial letters/syllables in words.

## Evolution

---

Below are some reflexes of proto-Trans-New Guinea proposed by Pawley (2012). The dialect given is Island Kiwai, unless otherwise indicated.<sup>[4]</sup>

proto-Trans-New Guinea	Kiwai (Island)
*mangat[a] 'teeth, mouth'	mangota
*m(i,u)ndu 'nose'	(Gope Kiwai modi, but Island Kiwai wodi)
*amu 'breast'	amo
*niman 'louse'	nimo
*(nd,s)umu(n,t)[V] 'hair'	? muso (metathesis?)
*ni '1PL'	ni(mo)
*takVn[V] 'moon'	sagana
*mbena 'arm'	(Kerewo Kiwai bena 'shoulder')
*mb(i,u)t(i,u)C 'fingernail'	pitu
*kV(mb,p)(i,u)t(i,u) 'head'	epuru (Wabuda kepuru)
*tukumba[C] 'short'	(?) kopu
*a(mb,m)u 'tail'	(?) wapo
*pi(n,nd)a 'sister'	abida
*k(a,o)ndok[V] 'foot'	Gope (N.E. Kiwai) oto, Morigi kota
*inja 'tree, wood, fire'	(S. Kiwai era)
*sumbu 'white ashes'	tuwo
*k(a,o)ndok[V] 'foot'	(Morigi kota, Gope (N.E. Kiwai) oto)
*kuk(a,u)m(o,u) 'cold'	(Bamu kukamu, Sisiame kukamo)
*ka(nd,t)(e,i)kV 'ear'	gare (Bamu Kiwai gare)

## Videos

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u\\_XeP9DxsKU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_XeP9DxsKU)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iB3Co9ggY10>
  - 2 hour long film: "The Jesus Film"

## Further reading

### Urama

- Brown, Jason; Muir, Alex; Craig, Kimberly; Anea, Karika (2016). *A Short Grammar of Urama*. Canberra: Asia-Pacific Linguistics. [hdl:1885/111328](https://hdl.handle.net/1885%2F111328) (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885%2F111328>). ISBN 9781922185228.
- Brown, Jason; Peterson, Tyler; Craig, Kimberley (2016). "Belief, Evidence, and Interactional Meaning in Urama". *Oceanic Linguistics*. **55** (2): 432–448. [doi:10.1353/ol.2016.0020](https://doi.org/10.1353/ol.2016.0020) (<https://doi.org/10.1353%2Fol.2016.0020>).

### La Trobe University

- Sidney Ray, *A Grammar of the Kiwai Language, Fly Delta, Papua, with a Kiwai Vocabulary* (London Missionary Society: Edward George Baker, 1931)

## External links

---

- A number of collections in Paradisec include Southern Kiwai ([http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/search?language\\_code=kue](http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/search?language_code=kue)) materials

## References

---

1. Northeast Kiwai (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/kiw/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)  
Southern Kiwai (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/kjd/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Northeast Kiwai" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/nort2930>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Southern Kiwai" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/sout2949>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. Pawley, Andrew (2012). Hammarström, Harald; van den Heuvel, Wilco (eds.). "How reconstructable is proto Trans New Guinea? Problems, progress, prospects". *History, Contact and Classification of Papuan Languages*. Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea: Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea (Language & Linguistics in Melanesia Special Issue 2012: Part I): 88–164. hdl:1885/38602 (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885%2F38602>). ISSN 0023-1959 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0023-1959>).

---

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kiwai\\_language&oldid=942286451](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kiwai_language&oldid=942286451)"

---

**This page was last edited on 23 February 2020, at 19:33 (UTC).**

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.